

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-11 and 17-18 are presently active in this case, Claims 2 and 3 having been amended and Claims 12-16 and 19-20 having been canceled by way of the present Amendment. Claims 4-20 were indicated as being withdrawn from consideration, however, the Applicants note that Claim 1 is generic to all of the pending dependent claims.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The specific grounds for rejection are recited on page 3 of the Official Action. In response to the questions regarding the phrase "a field applier forming an equipotential surface" in line 4 of the Claim 1, the Applicants note that the present application describes a non-limiting embodiment of a field applier that includes a nozzle plate (3), a back plate (4), and a dc voltage source (5). (See page 7 lines 17-25, of the specification.) The application describes a non-limiting embodiment of the equipotential surface as equipotential surface group (51), which is formed by the nozzle plate (3), the back plate (4), and the dc voltage source (5). Regarding whether the field applier is a double inclusion of the liquid holder, the Applicants note that the specification describes a non-limiting embodiment in which a portion of the field applier, namely nozzle plate (3), also serves as a portion of the liquid holder. However, the present invention is not limited to such an embodiment. The present invention as recited in Claim 1 additionally encompasses embodiments where the field applier and liquid holder are constructed of different structures, as would be clearly evident to one of ordinary skill in the art based upon the teachings of the present invention. The Applicants submit that it is

improper to conclude that a claim is indefinite merely because it covers plural embodiments. Claim 1 clearly sets forth the subject matter claimed, and therefore is definite under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claim 2 has been amended to clarify that the liquid holder comprises the conductive nozzle plate, and Claim 3 has been amended to clarify that the conductive nozzle plate further comprises a concave portion. The Applicants submit that the claims are definite under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and therefore the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejections.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hochberg, deceased et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,046,074). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants traverse the anticipatory rejection.

Claim 1 of the present application recites a liquid sprayer comprising a liquid holder exposing a liquid surface of conductive liquid sprayed on an object; and a field applier forming an equipotential surface convexed with respect to the liquid surface of a conductive liquid sprayed on an object. The Applicants submit that the cited reference does not disclose a field applier forming an equipotential surface convexed with respect to the liquid surface, as recited in Claim 1.

The Hochberg et al. reference describes a non-impact printing system for making in-situ an energy sensitive surface on a passive support medium from at least two materials which in combination render the surface energy sensitive. The Official Action cites printing head (30) for the teaching of the liquid holder of the present invention, and conductors (40) and common electrode (42) for the teaching of the field applier. The printing head (30) includes a series of orifices (44).

The Applicants submit that the conductors (40) and the common electrode (42) of the Hochberg et al. reference are not disclosed as being capable of forming an equipotential

surface convexed with respect to a liquid surface exposed by the printing head (30). Accordingly, the Applicants submit that the Hochberg et al. reference does not anticipate Claim 1 of the present application, which expressly recites a field applier forming an equipotential surface convexed with respect to the liquid surface.

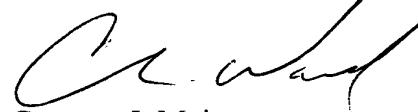
Claims 2 and 3 are considered allowable for the reasons advanced for Claim 1 from which they depend. These claims are further considered allowable as they recite other features of the invention that are neither disclosed, taught, nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of Claim 1.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection.

Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS

2. (Once Amended) The liquid sprayer according to claim 1, wherein said liquid holder comprises [comprising:] a conductive nozzle plate, supplied with a potential different from that for said object, said conductive nozzle plate having:

 a first opening exposing said liquid surface, and

 a second opening wider than said first opening and arranged closer to said object than said first opening.

3. (Once Amended) The liquid sprayer according to claim 2, wherein said conductive nozzle plate further comprises [comprising]:

 a concave portion provided between said first opening and said second opening and concaved with respect to said object.

12-16. (Cancel)

19-20. (Cancel)